Like as the Time will come When it Will Rain

Kuneida Saika

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いつか雨が降るように

Like as the time will come when it will rain

国枝彩香

Kunieda Saika

REIJIN selection

BAMBOO COMICS

AKE

BAMBOO COMICS

REIJIN

Like as the Time will Come When it Will Rain

Kunieda Saika

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Included Works:

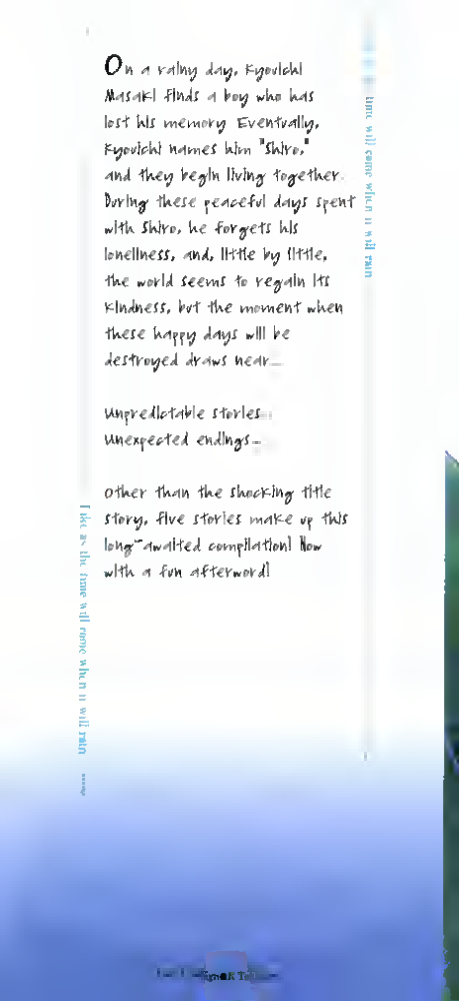
Like as the Time Will Come When it Will Rain
An Uncertain Cycle
Changing Odds
Reflections in the Water
Secrets and Lies
A Single Futon
The Curse

On a rainy day, Kyouichi Masaki finds a boy who has lost his memory. Eventually, Kyouichi names him "Shiro," and they begin living together. During these peaceful days spent with Shiro, he forgets his loneliness, and, little by little, the world seems to regain its kindness, but the moment when these happy days will be destroyed draws near...

Unpredictable stories...
Unexpected endings...

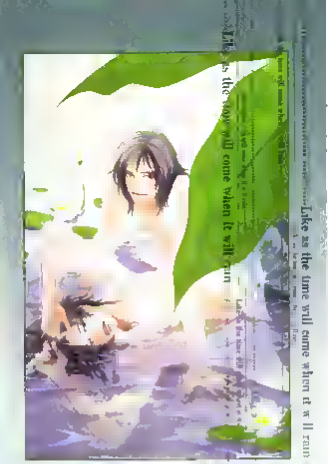
Other than the shocking title story, five stories make up this long-awaited compilation! Now with a fun afterword!

Until it will come when it will rain



どうか雨が降るように

国枝彩香



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Like as the time will come when it will rain

itsuka ame ga furu you ni

shhh
splish

HEY...
HEY!
UHN
ARE YOU DEAD?
shhh...
UGH
IT HURTS
splash!

wobble
AH—
WAIT!
splash!
splash
hmm
UH.
ER...
IT HURTS...
AH—

WHERE
WHERE AM I?
UM
ERR
UH

I'M
WHY AM I—?

shh..
slide
thump
LIH
ARGH!
duck
squeeze
sit
ER...
I'M... I'M SORRY

KYOUICHI MASAKI.
IT'S KYOU-ICHI
KYOU-ICHI SAN
SO, IS THIS UH WHERE YOU LIVE M MISTER?
flop
I'M ER...
I'M
clutch
tremble
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING AT ALL
WHO AM I ?

ANYONE WILL DO
LET ME SEE YOUR FOOT
flump
!
shock
THANK YOU VERY MUCH
KEEP IT COOL, AND IT WILL HEAL
OH
YOU'VE TWISTED IT A LITTLE

I'M GOING TO WORK
HUH?
IF YOU GET HUNGRY, GRAB SOMETHING FROM THE KITCHEN
YOU CAN WEAR WHATEVER CLOTHES ARE AROUND HERE
WHEN IT SEEMS LIKE YOU CAN WALK YOU CAN GO HOME OR GO TO THE POLICE, IF YOU WANT
SEE YA
slide
close!

WELCOME HOME!
slide
YOU—
YOU'RE STILL HERE?
close
UH—
swish
IS YOUR FOOT BETTER?
step
OH— YES
IT'S MUCH BETTER
WHATEVER— I DON'T CARE

YES
I CAN ONLY MAKE SIMPLE THINGS, BUT...
DID YOU MAKE THIS?
I'M RELIEVED
phew
REALLY?
TASTES GOOD
.....
Sigh
AND UNFORTUNATELY, A LOT OF THEM HAD GONE BAD
THERE WERE HARDLY ANY INGREDIENTS IN THE KITCHEN...
BUT
UH

MAKE A LIST OF WHAT YOU NEED...
TO-MORROW I'LL BUY THEM FOR YOU
OH
OKAY

HEY
flinch
<HIC>
<HIC>
<HIC>
NO— THAT'S NOT IT...
flinch
DID YOU RE-MEMBER SOME-THING?
sniff
I'M SORRY. DID I WAKE YOU...?
OH

YEAH
MAYBE
THEN WHY ARE YOU CRYING?
I WAS DREAMING
Sob
IT WAS A KINDA... GOOD DREAM
DAMN
wipe
SORRY... FORGET IT
HUH
HUH

NN
NMN
<PANT>
<PANT>
<PANT>
slap
ST
HEY!
STOP IT! ENOUGH!
ST

DAMN IT
!
UH

slam!

sigh
STILL HERE...?
YOU TOLD ME
MAKE A LIST OF WHAT I NEED
HUH?
HERE
WELL... WHATEVER
!!

WHY SHOULD I BE?
YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF ME?
YOU
MARKET
FOR SOME REASON, I UNDERSTAND THESE THINGS.
YOUR TATTOO... THE SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUR LITTLE FINGER.
OR MAYBE YOU'VE FORGOTTEN ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT.
BECAUSE, OBVIOUSLY, I'M NOT A RESPECTABLE GUY.
!
AND WHAT I TRIED TO DO LAST NIGHT
DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT, TOO?

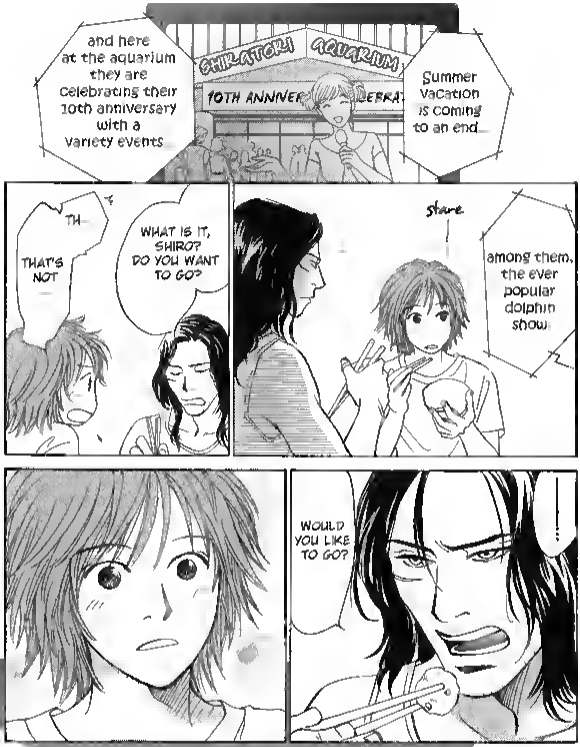
IF YOU REALLY WANT TO DO IT, NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I RESIST, AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO DO IT ANYWAY?
WHEN YOU SAW MY BODY, YOU FELT SORRY FOR ME!
WH...?
glare
HUH?
HEY HEY...!
YOU'RE ALL TALK SO THREATENING ME IS POINTLESS!
IF YOU WANT TO DO IT YOU CAN— BUT I'M GOING TO RESIST EVERY TIME!
SALE
sigh
PANT
PANT
PANT

YOU SAVED ME
YOU'RE A GOOD PERSON
A LITTLE WHILE AGO ... I FORGOT TO SAY ...
WHAT? THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE?
LET'S GO!
UH
LET ME TAKE THAT!
whisk
hmph
YOU IDIOT!
SCREW YOU!

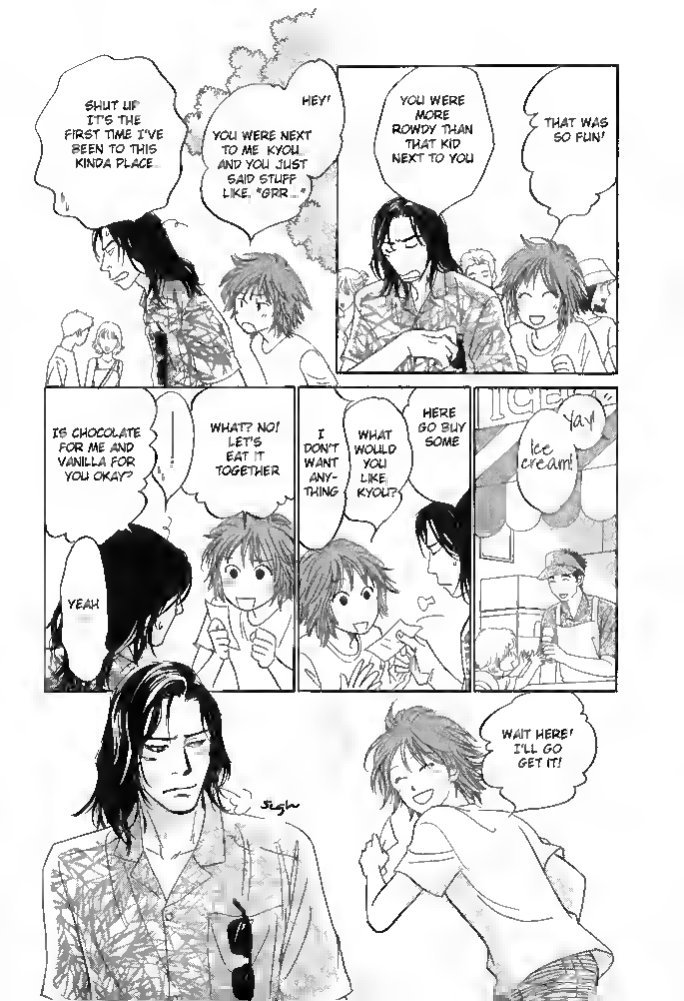
!
HEY!
HEY...!
shit
HE DOESN'T HAVE A NAME SO I CAN'T USE IT...
POP
WHAT IS IT? DID YOU CALL ME?
YO!
YOU'RE NOT HERE?
WHAT?
"SUBU"
UHH
mumble mumble
"TAROU"
"JIROU"
GIVE ME ONE KYOUICHI-SAN
!
IT'S YOUR NAME
WE NEED TO GIVE YOU A GOOD ONE
JUST WHILE YOU'RE HERE

NAME ME, KYOUICHI-SAN
KYOU
I'M NOT GOOD AT IT
BUT
I CAN'T NAME MYSELF
SHIRO ?
HH
DO I LOOK LIKE A DOG—?
"SHIRO—"
HOW'S THAT?
IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, FINE!
OH!
I'M OKAY WITH SHIRO!
turn
WHAT'S WRONG? DID YOU USED TO HAVE A PET DOG WITH THIS NAME?
I'VE NEVER HAD A PET EXCEPT FOR YOU!

"KYOU"—?
HUH?
IT MAKES MY ASS ITCH.
"KYOU" IS FINE
irritable
HUH? WHY?
THAT ASIDE STOP THIS "KYOUICHI-SAN" STUFF.
KYOU!
WHAT?!
SLAP!
HEY, HEY, KYOU!
CALL MINE, TOO!
YOU WANT ME TO CALL JUST FOR THE HELL OF IT?
YEAH! IT'S SO COOL! I'VE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR A NAME!
COME ON! COME ON!
I SAID, COME ON!
SHUT UP, SHIRO!
WOOF!


and here at the aquarium they are celebrating their 10th anniversary with a variety events
SHIRATORI AQUARIUM
10TH ANNIVER LEBRA
Summer vacation is coming to an end...
TH
THAT'S NOT
WHAT IS IT, SHIRO? DO YOU WANT TO GO?
share
among them, the ever popular dolphin show.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO?
!

YAY...!
AWESOME! AWESOME!
splash


SHUT UP! IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE BEEN TO THIS KINDA PLACE...
HEY! YOU WERE NEXT TO ME KYOU... AND YOU JUST SAID STUFF LIKE, "GRR..."
YOU WERE MORE ROWDY THAN THAT KID NEXT TO YOU
THAT WAS SO FUN!
IS CHOCOLATE FOR ME AND VANILLA FOR YOU OKAY?
WHAT? NO! LET'S EAT IT TOGETHER
YEAH
I DON'T WANT ANY-THING
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE KYOU?
HERE GO BUY SOME
Yay! Ice cream!
WAIT HERE! I'LL GO GET IT!
Sigh

MASAKI? HEY, AREN'T YOU MASAKI?
I THOUGHT SO!
HEY, HEY, STRANGE MEETING YOU HERE!
WHAT'S WITH THAT FACE?
NO WAY! YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN YOUR OLD PAL HAVE YOU?
HUH?
TSU-CHIYA —
KYOU!
THANKS FOR WAI—

OH, HEY, HEY... I WAS JUST KIDDING! YOU'RE JUST AS UNFRIENDLY AS EVER.
LET'S GO
EVEN THOUGH
SO... YOU'VE GOT A TASTE FOR THIS, TOO?
WHO'S THIS?
WHOA! I THOUGHT YOU LIKED WOMEN...
MASAKI!
LET'S BE FRIENDS
WE'LL MEET AGAIN!

shhh...
plink
plink
plink
plink
so

THAT GUY JUST NOW
WHO WAS HE?
HE'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU
I KINDA HAD A BAD FEELING
KYOU... SOMETHING HORRIBLE
SHUT UP!
Splash
KYOU
shhha
IN THE END...
THE RAIN WILL FALL LIKE THIS.

shhh
KYOU —?
HUH?
WHAT?
IT'S OKAY
I'M WITH YOU, KYOU
SILLY
YOU'RE SOAKED
SOMEDAY YOU'LL LEAVE
LIKE THE RAIN SUDDENLY FALLS

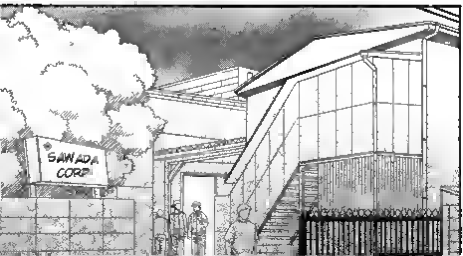
YOU'LL FORGET SPENDING TIME WITH ME, AND THE NAME "SHIRO—"
AND, THEN, DEFINITELY
YOUR PREVIOUS LIFE
THE GOOD, THE BAD EVERYTHING
SPARING NOTHING
YOU'LL REMEMBER, DEFINITELY
THAT
I WON'T FORGET!
I WANT US TO BE TOGETHER FOREVER!
I YOU—
WHY ARE YOU SAYING STUFF LIKE THAT?
THAT WILL NEVER HAPPEN!

NN
!!
AH
Squeeze
PANT
PANT
PANT

EVEN IF YOU SAID, "I HATE YOU..."
I WON'T STOP.
I DON'T CARE.
IT'S OKAY —
THIS TIME...
YOU'RE NOT RUNNING AWAY.
I—
LOVE YOU, KYOU
shhha..

I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING, BUT I HAD THE FEELING YOU WERE SOMEONE I KNEW.
WHEN I FIRST MET YOU, KYOU ....
THAT DAY ....
YOU WERE THE ONLY THING THAT LOOKED CLEAR.
EVERYTHING WAS BLURRY, LIKE IT WAS ENVELOPED IN FOG.
THE WORLD AROUND ME ....
HEY
YOU IDIOT ....
.....
MAYBE I KNEW SOMEWHERE IN MY HEART THIS WOULD HAPPEN.
I DON'T KNOW WHY.
I WAS THINKING, "I'VE ABSOLUTELY GOT TO CATCH HIM ...."

AH
NN
NN
NN
KYOU
UH


SAWADA
CORP.

MASAKI!
GOOD JOB TODAY.
YOU, TOO.
hustle, hustle

I KNOW YOU VERY WELL.
HEY, HEY! WHEN YOU'RE CONCERNED, IT'S EASY TO FIND A SINGLE PERSON.
HOW DID YOU KNOW I WAS HERE?

I WAS THE NEGOTIATOR.
AND YOU WERE THE ENFORCER WE MADE A GOOD TEAM.
IN THE OLD DAYS, DIDN'T THE TWO OF US GO AROUND TOGETHER?
...

THREE YEARS AGO, YOU AND I WENT OVER THERE TO COLLECT A DEBT
I'VE JUST REMEMBERED
HE'S THE SON OF SHIRAI CORPORATION
WATARU SHIRAI
LET'S SEE IN THE END, THE HUSBAND AND WIFE WOUND UP COMMITTING SUICIDE, DIDN'T THEY?
I'M SURE HE'LL HOLD A GRUDGE AGAINST US UNTIL DEATH —
Heh heh
HOW SAD! AFTER THAT, THE DEBT WAS PASSED ON TO THE REMAINING FAMILY MEMBER.
AND IT SEEMS HE HAD A PRETTY BAD EXPERIENCE TOO
I'VE FOUND YOU—

Uh...
IT'S YOUR FAULT MY MOTHER AND FATHER DIED!
I'VE FOUND YOU
IT'S YOU
splash
I'M GONNA KILL YOU!

WAH!
URGH
ARG
CLANK
GRAB
shha

I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT WHEN I SAW THAT KID HANGING OUT WITH YOU AT THE AQUARIUM!
BUT WHAT SHOCKED ME MOST WAS YOU
THAT KID...
HE DIDN'T EVEN RECOGNIZE MY FACE. HAS HE LOST HIS MEMORY?
WELL, HE'S PROBABLY BETTER OFF NOT REMEMBERING
FUUU
DID YOU INTEND TO BECOME COMPLETELY RESPECTABLE?
DOES THAT CUTE LITTLE BOY HAVE YOU BY THE BALLS?
OR DID YOU PLAN TO GIVE UP YOUR LIFE OF CRIME?
HUH?

WE USED TO BE FRIENDS, SO I'LL TAKE A LOSS
HA
HA HA!
DO YOU WANT MONEY?
plink
plink plink
I COULD MAKE HIM REMEMBER THE HAND YOU HAD IN IT
HOW-EVER
pff
SO TO START WITH I'LL TAKE 50,000 AS A DEPOSIT
THAT'S CHEAP, HUH? FOR PROTECTING YOUR PRESENT HAPPINESS
RIGHT?
shhaaa

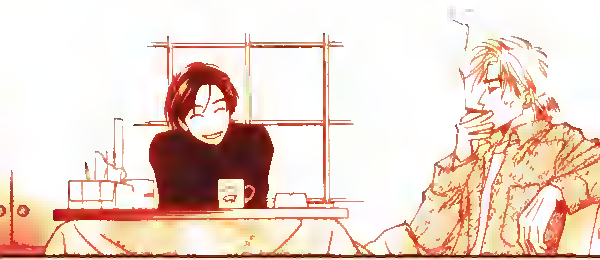
OH NO! YOU'RE SOAKED THROUGH!
SUDDENLY, IT STARTED POURING
ARE YOU OKAY KYOU?
hap hap
shhha...
YOU'D BETTER TAKE A BATH
SOMEDAY I'LL TELL YOU, SHIRO
WHEN THE RAINS FALLS YOU'LL DEFINITELY GO
KYOU ?

IF IT RAINS, IF IT POURS, I WON'T LET YOU GO.
BUT...
IT'S OKAY
YOU
FEEL THE SAME WAY, RIGHT?
I WON'T LET ANYONE STAND IN OUR WAY

And so ...
when the time comes that you remember everything ...
at that time ...
I will release you.
end

Like as the Time Will Come When it Will Rain

Kuneida Saika



chapter two

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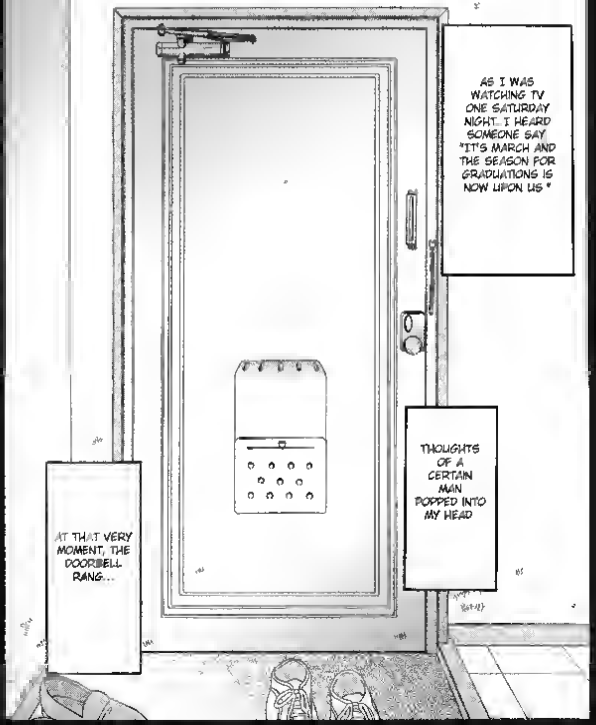
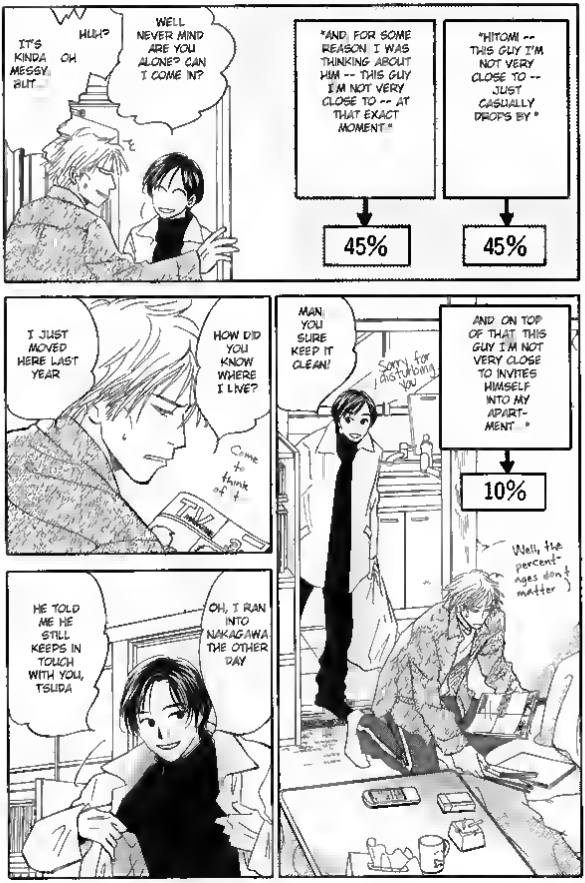
An Uncertain Cycle

Futei Shuuki


AS I WAS WATCHING TV ONE SATURDAY NIGHT, I HEARD SOMEONE SAY, "IT'S MARCH AND THE SEASON FOR GRADUATIONS IS NOW UPON US."
THOUGHTS OF A CERTAIN MAN POPPED INTO MY HEAD
AT THAT VERY MOMENT, THE DOORBELL RANG...

HI, THERE!
HOW'VE YOU BEEN TSUDA?
IT WAS NAOYUKI HITOMI.
HUH ...?
IN THIS WORLD, THERE ARE MANY MYSTERIOUS AND UNEXPLAINED THINGS
COME ON! SHOW A LITTLE SURPRISE!
AFTER FIVE YEARS AN OLD FRIEND JUST DROPS BY OUT OF THE BLUE ...?!
NO
I AM SUR-PRISED
HERE'S A BREAK-DOWN OF MY SURPRISE


IT'S KINDA MESSY, BUT...
HUH?
OH.
WELL NEVER MIND ARE YOU ALONE? CAN I COME IN?
"AND, FOR SOME REASON, I WAS THINKING ABOUT HIM -- THIS GUY I'M NOT VERY CLOSE TO -- AT THAT EXACT MOMENT."
"HITOMI -- THIS GUY I'M NOT VERY CLOSE TO -- JUST CASUALLY DROPS BY."
45%
45%
I JUST MOVED HERE LAST YEAR
HOW DID YOU KNOW WHERE I LIVE?
Come to think of it...
TSUDA
MAN, YOU SURE KEEP IT CLEAN!
Sorry for disturbing you
AND ON TOP OF THAT, THIS GUY I'M NOT VERY CLOSE TO INVITES HIMSELF INTO MY APARTMENT."
10%
Well, the percentages don't matter
HE TOLD ME HE STILL KEEPS IN TOUCH WITH YOU, TSUDA
OH, I RAN INTO NAKAGAWA THE OTHER DAY

AFTER WE GREW UP AND GOT JOBS WE STOPPED RUNNING INTO EACH OTHER.
SO ?
flick
HITOMI AND I WENT TO THE SAME KINDERGARTEN, MIDDLE SCHOOL AND COLLEGE BUT WE ATTENDED SEPARATE ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS
YOU COULD SAY OUR RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN FRAGMENTED LIKE A SERIES OF VACATIONS
So we have some friends in common.
WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT, I'VE HAD A LONG AND RATHER SUPERFICIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HITOMI
NOTHING MUCH WELL, ACTUALLY
WHAT'S UP?
I'M GETTING MARRIED SOON
WELL...
CONGRATULATIONS

WELL...
AFTER THE WEDDING I'M BEING TRANSFERED TO HONG KONG
ISN'T THERE ANYONE ELSE...? LIKE A FRIEND OR A COWORKER, OR GIRLFRIEND...?
Well, a girlfriend would be nice to have
WHY ME?
Hi the phone's over there

SO LET'S HAVE SOME DRINKS TO CELEBRATE THE END OF MY SINGLE LIFE!
HUH?
Look, I brought some snacks, too!

FOR EXAMPLE EVEN THOUGH THIS IS THE LAST DATE I'LL EVER HAVE, I'M NOT REALLY SAD
BUT, WITH YOU, TSUDA, EVEN IF WE HAVEN'T SEEN EACH OTHER IN YEARS IT'S JUST NATURAL AND EASY
Right?
I really don't understand what you're thinking
Beep

PEOPLE WOULD BE SAYING THINGS LIKE "TAKE CARE" "WE'LL MISS YOU" AND "HAVE A GOOD TRIP"
SO THIS WOULD TURN INTO A FAREWELL PARTY AND THAT'S JUST DEPRESSING RIGHT?
So that's...?
HUH?
Pshh

HITOMI-KUN
THIS IS FOR YOU
Hikari Kinder-garten Graduation ceremony
HE SEEMED LIKE A NICE GUY BUT I KNEW THE TRUTH HE WAS REALLY A COLD PERSON
BUT I'VE NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHAT THIS GUY WAS THINKING EVEN BACK IN THE OLD DAYS

Bye-bye
HITOMI-kun!
AAGH...! THANKS...
And Yumi-chan...!
A PEBBLE
A PEBBLE
I'm sure you'll think of Mike and take care of it.
Oh... and Mami-chan, too...!
IN KINDERGARTEN HITOMI-KUN'S BIG EYES* WERE EXTREMELY POPULAR WITH THE GIRLS
RUSHING TO PAY TRIBUTE
trot trot
Hm?
OH, IS HITOMI-KUN GOING TO A PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?
YES. SOMEHOW HE MANAGED TO GET IN...! HA HA HA
phew
THE INSTANT I SAW HIM DO THIS I REALIZED HE WAS TWO-FACED
nick
NAO-CHAN, WE'RE GOING HOME NOW...
OKAY.
Sniffle
TOSS

EVEN THOUGH WE'RE GRADUATING I WAS WONDERING IF WE COULD GET TOGETHER...
TIME PASSED
THE SPRING OF OUR MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADUATION
I LOVE YOU... HITOMI-KUN...
DID HE SAY "OKAY?" HE PISSES ME OFF.
GIRLS REALLY LIKE GUYS LIKE HIM.
OH, MAN... THAT HITOMI SURE IS POPULAR WITH THE LADIES...
WE WEREN'T PARTICULARLY CLOSE, EVEN BACK THEN...
...BUT, SOMETIMES, FROM A DISTANCE, OUR EYES WOULD MEET.
Isn't that great, Yay!
Good for you!
Eee...! He said "okay"...!
GEEZ, WHO CARES? I'VE GOT ALL OF YOU BASTARDS FOR FRIENDS!
HAHA!

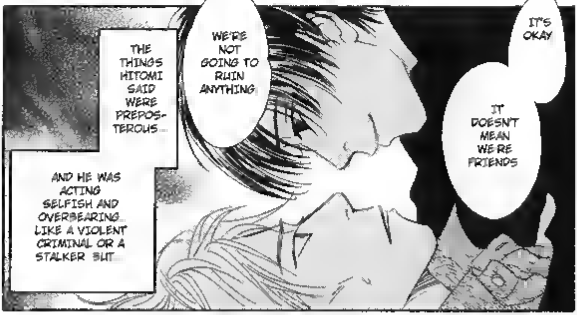
ON THAT PARTICULAR OCCASION, I SOMEHOW HAPPENED TO WITNESS THIS HORRIBLE SCENE
& Vicious to other people...
TWO-TIMING?!
HUH?
THANKS FOR WAITING! ♡
HITOMI...
step, step
BUT...
HITOMI JUST WALKED OFF WITH AN EASY
heh
NO, I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO THOUGHT IT WAS HORRIBLE
...BUT...
DO YOU REMEMBER, TSUDA?
WHEN WE WERE UNEXPECTEDLY REUNITED IN COLLEGE, I STAYED AWAY FROM HIM AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE...
HE RECOGNIZED ME THREE YEARS LATER...
Oh
UGH!

YOU KNOW IT WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE OUR COLLEGE GRADU-
WE'D GONE TO A FARE-WELL PARTY, I BELIEVE
YOU COULD TELL I WAS IN TROUBLE, RIGHT?
WAS I REALLY THINKING HE WAS IN TROUBLE?
OH, COME ON! YOU'RE JUST PLAYING DUMB...
REMEMBER WHAT?
Just stay calm...
I
SHE SEEMED VERY PERSISTENT AND EVEN YOU LOOKED FED UP.
THAT DAY YOU WERE ARGUING WITH A GIRL.
OF COURSE I REMEMBER.
FOR AN INSTANT, YOU LOOKED DESPERATE...
...THEN, IMMEDIATELY, YOU RETURNED TO YOUR NORMAL, RELAXED SELF.
THEN, JUST BY CHANCE, I HAPPENED TO PASS BY....
I WAS CAREFUL TO STAY FAR AWAY...
WE'VE GOT ANOTHER PARTY!
SEE YA!

THEN, ALL OF A SUDDEN, YOU FLING YOUR ARMS AROUND ME....
I FORGOT!
I'D FINALLY MANAGED TO FORGET
HEY, YOU SAVED ME BACK THEN!
FROM THAT ANNOYING WOMAN AT ANY RATE
WHEN SHE FOUND OUT THAT MY NEW LOVER WAS MAN SHE GAVE UP!
"FOUND OUT?!" ISN'T IT MORE LIKE "GOT THE WRONG IDEA?"
WELL DOESN'T REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE
YOU JERK!
YOU CAME HERE WITH THE INTENTION OF BRINGING UP THIS OLD STORY, DIDN'T YOU?!
Get away from me!!
heh heh
THAT'S NOT IT.
I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT THAT OLD STORY

flump
whomp
I WANT TO PICK UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF.
!

AREN'T YOU GETTING MARRIED?!
YES
AND THAT'S WHY I'M TYING UP ANY LOOSE ENDS
HEY!
WHAT KIND OF PERSON DO YOU
I MEAN, WAIT!
EXACTLY WHAT ROLE AM I PLAYING HERE?
HUH?
IT'S OKAY I WON'T HURT YOU
POUNCE
COME ON
YOU'VE FELT A LITTLE SOMETHING BETWEEN US HAVEN'T YOU TSUDA?
ISN'T THAT WHY YOU LET ME INTO YOUR APARTMENT?
YOU COULD HAVE MADE UP AN EXCUSE AND TURNED ME AWAY
I'VE
ALWAYS KNOWN THIS WOULD HAPPEN SOMEDAY
SOMETHING ABOUT YOU, TSUDA, FEELS LIKE DESTINY


IT'S OKAY
IT DOESN'T MEAN WE'RE FRIENDS
WE'RE NOT GOING TO RUIN ANYTHING
THE THINGS HITOMI SAID WERE PREPOSTEROUS...
AND HE WAS ACTING SELFISH AND OVERBEARING... LIKE A VIOLENT CRIMINAL OR A STALKER BUT...

...SOMEWHERE DEEP INSIDE I HAD THE ODD NOTION THAT I WAS THE SAME WAY...

I DON'T WANT TO CAUSE TROUBLE
WHAT IF YOUR FUTURE BRIDE STORMS IN AND STARTS YELLING--?
HA HA HA
DON'T WORRY THAT WON'T HAPPEN!

IS THIS SOME KIND OF JOKE?
MM?

BUT...
THIS HORRIBLE MAN CALMLY CHEATED ON HIS FIANCEE RIGHT BEFORE MY VERY EYES
CREAK
I ALREADY KNEW THIS WAS HITOMI'S TRUE CHARACTER
NN...
FROM THAT POINT ON...
HITOMI AND I DIDN'T SAY ANOTHER WORD

...IT SEEMS LIKE WE GET ALONG AS LONG AS WE'RE NOT TALKING
...
I THOUGHT VAGUELY
...
SO
WE WOUND UP GAZING INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES AND FINISHING SIMULTANEOUSLY

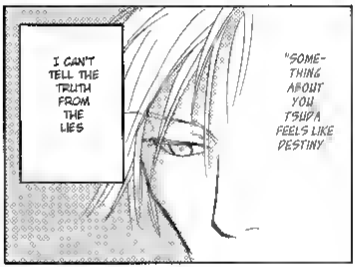
Ugh.
YEAH.
I'VE GOTTA GO
YOU'RE LEAVING ...?
rustle
IS IT MORNING ALREADY ?
DON'T YOU WANT TO TAKE A SHOWER ?
NO I DON'T HAVE TIME
WHY? WHAT'S UP?
THE CEREMONY IS STARTING AT NOON
I EXPLAINED EVERYTHING RIGHT?
WHY ARE YOU SO SURPRISED? I SAID "I'M GETTING MARRIED"
Hey, what did you just say?
CEREMONY? YOUR WEDDING CEREMONY?
YEAH.
IT'S TODAY?!
YEAH.
CEREMONY..?
BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S TODAY... AND YOU'RE GONNA SHOW UP STINKING LIKE FISU?!

IT'S BEEN GREAT!
WELL IT'S BEEN NICE SEEING YOU!
OH THAT'S!

I SEE
MARCH
IS THE SEASON FOR GOODBYES
WITHOUT LEAVING AN ADDRESS OR PROMISES FOR THE FUTURE
close
SEE YA
HITOMI LEFT IN THE SAME EASY WAY HE CAME

"I'M TYING UP LOOSE ENDS"
"EVEN THOUGH THIS IS THE LAST DATE OF MY LIFE I'M NOT REALLY SAD"
WHY DID HE CHOOSE ME?

WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT WHENEVER HE APPEARS
IT'S ALWAYS A PRELUDE TO SEPARATION


I CAN'T TELL THE TRUTH FROM THE LIES
"SOMETHING ABOUT YOU TSUDA FEELS LIKE DESTINY"

LATER
I GOT A CALL FROM NAKAGAWA

I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THIS GUY IS THINKING

IT WAS A VERY EXTRAVAGANT WEDDING I WAS INTIMIDATED
NAKAGAWA
HIS WIFE'S FAMILY RUNS A LARGE FINANCIAL CONGLOMERATE IN HONG KONG AND HITOMI MARRIED HER OUT OF NECESSITY
IT SEEMS HITOMI GOT MARRIED AND LEFT JAPAN AS PLANNED
THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT THAT WOMAN WAS WELL PAST FORTY!
WELL AS THEY SAY, IT WAS A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE
SO THAT'S WHY
DUE TO THE RECESSION, HITOMI HAD FALLEN ON HARD TIMES IN THE BUSINESS WORLD
I DIDN'T KNOW THIS BUT ACCORDING TO A CERTAIN SOMEONE (WHO HAPPENS TO BE THE SON OF NAKAGAWA CORPORATION'S PRESIDENT)
HEY!
BY THE WAY, WERE YOU AND HITOMI GOOD FRIENDS-TSUDA?
FOR MY PART, I BUT UNDERSTAND HIS ACTIONS ON THE NIGHT BEFORE HIS WEDDING
YOU COULD SEE IT LIKE THAT BUT
IT WAS A SACRIFICE FOR THE BENEFIT OF HER PARENTS COMPANY AND THEIR EMPLOYEES
UH, NOT REALLY
DO YOU WANT HIS ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER?

WE WOULD CONNECT FOR ONLY AN INSTANT, THEN SEPARATE
WE WOULD DEFINITELY MEET AGAIN
NO THANKS
IT'S OKAY
I WAS STRANGELY CERTAIN
NEITHER FRIENDS NOR LOVERS
—BUT SOMEONE NO ONE ELSE CAN REPLACE—
A RELATION-SHIP OF MUTUAL AFFIRMA-TION
AM I LOOKING FORWARD TO IT OR DREADING IT?
I DON'T KNOW ANYMORE
WHEN WILL THE NEXT TIME BE?
end

Changing Odds

Kakuritsu Hendou

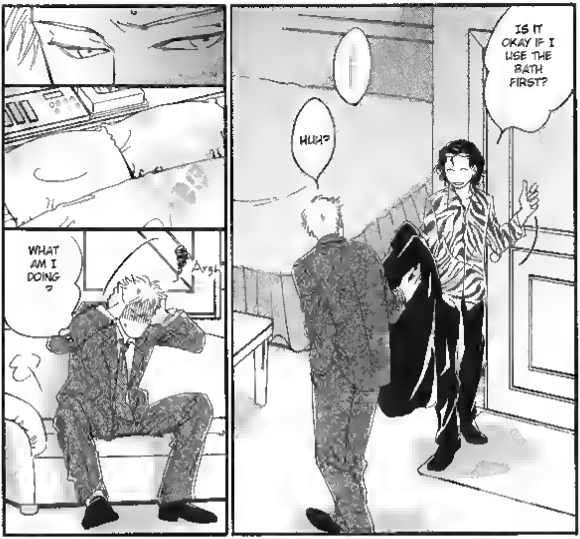
HUH?
BY CHANCE, I WENT INTO A PACHINKO PARLOR, SAT DOWN AT A MACHINE AND SITTING RIGHT NEXT TO ME WAS A MAN I KNEW
WHAT WERE THE ODDS?

TSUDA?
ESPECIALLY, THIS GUY
HITOMI NAOYUKI WHAT WERE THE CHANCES OF MEETING HIM UNDER JAPANESE SKIES?
ZERO
.....
—OR THAT'S WHAT I'D THOUGHT
—UNTIL THIS VERY MOMENT
HUH?
HEY STILL THAT SAME LACK OF REACTION...!
ISN'T THIS A ONE IN A MILLION CHANCE? SHOW A LITTLE SURPRISE!
NO I AM SURPRISED
WELL NEVER MIND HOW HAVE YOU BEEN? DO YOU COME HERE A LOT?
NO IT'S MY FIRST TIME

I'M CERTAIN BECAUSE HE SAID SO HIMSELF.
IT'S OKAY
WE'RE SPEAKING INTIMATELY BUT THAT'S NOT BECAUSE THIS GUY IS MY FRIEND
WELL WHATEVER I'M GLAD I RAN INTO YOU!
MAN! SEEMS LIKE WE'RE BOUND BY SOME KIND OF DESTINY!
Ya thank you
Oh you want a piece of this?
Jingle
WE WON'T RUIN ANYTHING
WE'RE NOT FRIENDS, SO...
DING DING DING DING
♪ Jingle jingle jingle
DING DING
All right beat the odds!
That was 3 years ago
WHY DID I JUST REMEMBER THAT...?

ARE YOU...?
OH!
THAT'S RIGHT!
thump
This isn't right
NOT BAD
I WON 30 THOUSAND
I LOST 20 THOUSAND
he he he he...
YOU FINALLY GOT MARRIED, TSUDA CONGRATULATIONS!
OH!
NO—
ACTUALLY
BUT YOU'VE BEEN DIVORCED FOR HALF A YEAR?
WELL THERE ARE A LOT OF FISH IN THE SEA!
SO CHEER UP!
pat
This guy hasn't changed a bit

WE DEFINITELY HAVE SOME MUTUAL FRIENDS...
BUT
HEY... GOT ANY PLANS TONIGHT?
NO NOT REALLY...
I SEE WELL THEN
3F
WHY?
HUH? NAKAGAWA
I believe
WHO TOLD YOU?
HITOMI SHOWS NO SIGNS OF FITTING IN WITH THE REST OF US...
OH
HEY NOW
Great! Then let's go!
OR DO YOU WANT TO CHECK OUT SOME OTHER PLACES?
HOTE
Honey
INFORMATION
EST ¥5,500~
TAY ¥8,800~
SERVICE TIME
HOW ABOUT THIS PLACE?


WHAT AM I DOING ?
Argh
HUH?
IS IT OKAY IF I USE THE BATH FIRST?

Shit I can't do this sober
BUT HE PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE GIVEN ME A STRAIGHT ANSWER.
THERE WERE LOTS THINGS I SHOULD HAVE ASKED
"WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?"
"DIDN'T YOU GET MARRIED THREE YEARS AGO AND MOVE TO HONG KONG?"
AND SO ON

HUH?
I'LL MAKE IT UP TO YOU NEXT WEEK OR THE WEEK AFTER...
OH SORRY SOMETHING CAME UP
TSUDA-KUN! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU MISSED OUR DATE
WHAAAT?! YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS? TODAY IS MY BIRTHDAY!
OH NO!
LA LA LA LA
ACTUALLY THERE WERE THINGS I DIDN'T WANT TO KNOW
REALLY WHAT AM I DOING...?
SIGH
SELF-LOATHING
AGE
DIDN'T YOU HAVE TO MAKE THE RESERVATION A MONTH AGO?! IT'S AN EXTREMELY POPULAR RESTAURANT!!
OH
WELL WHY DON'T YOU GO AHEAD AND EAT THEN?
I'LL BE THERE IN TWO HOURS NO, MAKE THAT AN HOUR AND A HALF...
I WONDER IF I'VE BEEN DUMPED
NO THANKS!
I'LL PAY FOR IT
GOOD-BYE !!
FURIOUS

phtt
I FEEL GREAT!
I HAVEN'T HAD A BATH IN WEEK
THANKS FOR WAITING
I'VE BECOME KINDA HOMELESS SINCE THE LAST TIME YOU SAW ME...
YEAH... THINGS DIDN'T WORK OUT WITH MY WIFE. SO WE'RE NOT LIVING TOGETHER ANYMORE
Oh, I'll have a beer, too.
Yeah, you kinda smelled bad...
open
SO, OKAY...
tmp
OF COURSE NOT! THE BATH WAS SECONDARY!
ha ha ha
Public baths are cheap!
NO WAY!
DID YOU COME HERE JUST TO TAKE A BATH?

WAIT! I NEED A SHOWER, TOO
I CAN'T WAIT! ♪
slurp
UUH
WHAT?!
HEY, HEY!
LET'S GET STARTED THEN!
WOW, YOU'RE PRETTY EXCITED AREN'T YOU TSUDA →?
HEH HEH
pant
SHIT
WHY?
suck
DAMN
tremble

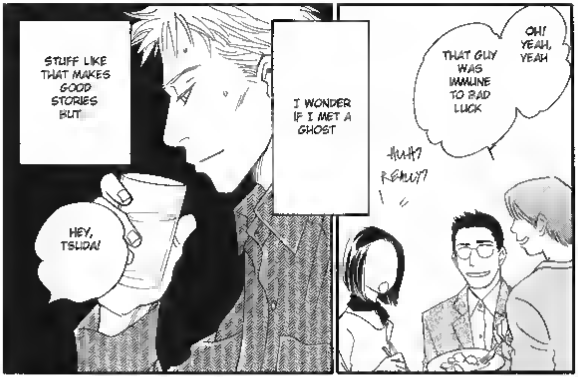
IS THIS YOUR FIRST TIME SINCE YOUR DIVORCE?
SHUT UP!
SEE YOU'RE ALREADY LIKE THIS...
WHY CAN'T I FIGHT IT?
THE URGE IS REALLY BUILDING UP INSIDE YOU
pant
pant
HEH.
JUST BE QUIET!
AGREED
whish

I DON'T KNOW IF WE EVEN LIKE EACH OTHER...
WE'RE NOT FRIENDS OR LOVERS
"YOU'RE SO COLD"
THE WOMAN WHO WAS MY WIFE UNTIL THE AUTUMN SAID
THERE'S NOTHING LIKE LOVE OR SINCERITY
AT LEAST WHEN WE'RE TOGETHER...

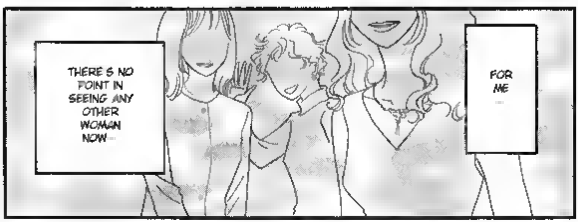
IT'S PROBABLY TRUE
HOWEVER HITOMI ENTICES ME
I DON'T UNDER-STAND
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT OTHER PEOPLE ARE THINKING
EVEN IF I UNDER-STOOD WHAT DIFFERENCE WOULD IT MAKE?

HITOMI HAD DISAPPEARED
WHEN I CAME TO MY SENSES
pant
pant
pant
THAT WAS GREAT
HOW-EVER
WE LOOKED AT EACH OTHER, JUST BEFORE FALLING ASLEEP
ALL THE CASH IN MY WALLET HAD DISAP-PEARED, TOO
WELL
I SORTA EXPECTED AS MUCH, BUT
Are my credit cards safe?
HE SAID HIS VOICE LINGERING STRANGELY IN MY EARS
TSUDA
NEXT TIME LET'S DO SOMETHING EVEN BETTER

I WISH HITOMI-KUN COULD HAVE BEEN HERE...
HITOMI WAS THE HOT TOPIC OF CONVERSATION
Welcome Today
Hikari Middle School, 6th Class Reunion
A FEWS DAYS LATER, AT OUR CLASS REUNION
IT'S TRUE THAT GOOD PEOPLE DIE YOUNG...
WHEN I HEARD THE NEWS I THOUGHT IT MUST BE SOME KIND OF MISTAKE. BUT...
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! HE WAS SO YOUNG...
I HAVE THE FEELING HE'S ALIVE SOMEWHERE
IT'S A STRANGE STORY
BUT, YOU KNOW
HIS BODY WAS NEVER FOUND
LAST SUMMER
THERE WAS A PLANE CRASH IN THE PACIFIC OCEAN EVEN I KNEW THAT HITOMI'S NAME HAD BEEN ON THE PASSENGER LIST
CRASH!
JAPANESE PASSENGER


STUFF LIKE THAT MAKES GOOD STORIES BUT...
HEY, TSUDA!
I WONDER IF I MET A GHOST
OH! YEAH, YEAH
THAT GUY WAS IMMUNE TO BAD LUCK
HUH?
REALLY?

NAKAGAWA
SO YOU'RE SEPARATED FROM REIKA-CHAN
AND AFTER I TOOK THE TROUBLE OF INTRODUCING YOU !
OH... I'M SORRY
ARE YOU SEEING SOMEONE NEW?
OR CAN'T YOU FORGET ABOUT YOUR EX-WIFE?
NO


THERE'S NO POINT IN SEEING ANY OTHER WOMAN NOW...
FOR ME...

DESTINY AND NATURAL DISASTERS ARE SIMILARLY UNAVOIDABLE
SO THERE'S NO ESCAPING IT
THAT MEANS HE'LL SHOW UP AGAIN
"NEXT TIME..." HITOMI SAID

MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE...

I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THIS TIME...
I SHOULD GIVE UP OR HOLD ON TO THIS LITTLE BIT OF HOPE IN MY CHEST...
I'M STILL WAITING

end

Like as the Time Will Come When it Will Rain

Kunieda Saika

chapter three

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http://yourpresence.livejournal.com

Reflections in the Water

Mizu Kagami

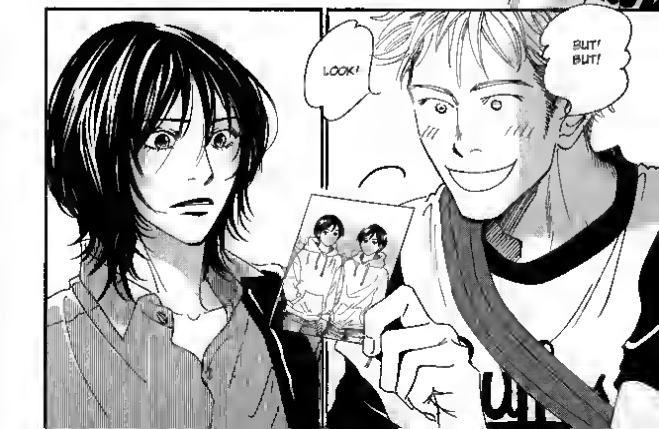
FROM THE TIME I WAS BORN, WE LOOKED THE SAME, AND ALL OUR CLOTHES MATCHED...

SO, BACK THEN, I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE...

...WE WERE SEPARATE BEINGS

NOW ...?
HEY WHAT'S THIS?
I N
WHAT DO YOU THINK RYUU?
FUKAWA!

HAYASE
HEY! FUKAMI
WHAT'S UP? YOU'RE RUNNING AND
It's not out
puff puff
IT'S NOTHING I THOUGHT I'D RETURN THE BOOK I BORROWED
puff puff
YOU heh CAN DO THAT ANY TIME


LOOK!
BUT! BUT!

AND YOU'VE GOT A TWIN, TOO! I MEAN WHICH ONE IS YOU, FUKAMI?
WAIT, WAIT! LET ME GUESS!
HEY, HEY THAT'S WHEN YOU WERE A KID, HUH? YOU STILL LOOK THE SAME!
IT WAS STUCK INSIDE THE BOOK!
HEH
WRONG
ISN'T
ISN'T THAT YOU?
THIS ONE!
THAT'S YOUR SMILE, RIGHT?
HUH ?
REALLY?
THE ONE FROWNING IS ME
THAT'S MY BROTHER, RYUU

THIS IS THE FIRST I'VE HEARD ABOUT IT...
REALLY? I DIDN'T TELL YOU?
I NEVER KNEW...
...YOU'VE GOT A TWIN, SHOU.
B... BUT...
WHAT? IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL...
BUT I WAS SO SURE...
SHOCKED
NO, BUT YOU SEE...
What are you doing?
...I WANT TO CORRECTLY IDENTIFY THE PERSON I L-LOVE, RIGHT?
IT'S NOT AS IF WE'RE ALIKE NOW
WELL... IT'S NOT WORTH TALKING ABOUT
THIS GUY IS SHOU FUKAMI
ANNOYED

REALLY? WHY?
Yeah, kinda!
UH... WELL I'D LIKE TO MEET HIM.
WHAT'S HE LIKE? ORDINARY.
SO WHAT'S YOUR BROTHER LIKE SHOU?
Uh...
HEY!
OH
EVEN WHILE HE'S SMILING, HE SURROUNDS HIMSELF WITH AN IMPREGNABLE BARRIER, AND
...YOU CAN'T EASILY GET INSIDE
I knew he'd be a little discouraging
"Why?"
WOULD YOU MIND NOT DOING THAT?
Yes
A LITTLE WHILE AGO, YOU CALLED ME "SHOU."
HUH? WHAT'S WRONG?
BY THE WAY, HAYASE
I MUST ADMIT MY LOVE HAS A LOT OF DIFFICULTIES IN STORE.
yeah
I'D BE MORE COMFORTABLE WITH THAT.
see ya
CALL ME "FUKAMI," LIKE USUAL

BUT, WELL...
I DON'T MIND IF HE'S COLD
SHOU...
close
YOU LIED
I DID?
THAT OLD PHOTO-GRAPH
HE GUESSED COR-RECTLY DIDN'T HE?
.....
Plum

HEH.
IF YOU KEEP THINKING LIKE THAT, HE'LL RUN OFF WITH SOMEONE PRETTIER.
flump
GEEZ. YOU'RE MAKING NO PROG-RESS.
SHUT UP, RYOU.
YOU KNOW HOW HE FEELS ABOUT YOU.
HAYASE IS JUST A FRIEND
turn
I'VE TAKEN A LIKING TO HIM.
.....
SHHA...
HEH, HEH
IT'S OKAY
.....
WHAT'S WRONG?
ARE YOU ANGRY THAT HE GOT IT RIGHT?
SHHH
YES
I LIKE HIM VERY MUCH

CUT
OW...
HEH, HEH.
GREAT IT WAS TOUGH
I COMPLETED THE ASSIGNMENT ALL BY MYSELF!
NO WAY!
YEAH
DID YOU CUT YOURSELF?
HM? WHAT?
Paper cuts hurt!
OH
SORRY
HOLD ON
pppp...
pppp
pppp...
WHY DID I GET TURNED ON IN BROAD DAYLIGHT?!
AAAAH
DON'T DO THAT!
lick
I JUST SPACED OUT A LITTLE.
BATHUMP!

OOH
HUH?
Such a cold vibe.
DID YOU GET A MESSAGE? FROM WHOM?
close
Calm down! Ask what he's doing for summer break and invite him to the beach, the mountains... If it's okay, maybe we could do this
I mean we could do th... or somethi... like that
Heh, heh, heh...
HAYASE
Are you guys close?
REALLY?
LIH RYUU-KUN RIGHT?
FROM MY BROTHER
What's wrong?
YEAH?
DO YOU WANT TO MEET RYUU?

burn
flicker
flip
exhale

AND YOU'RE DAISUKE HAYASE-KUN
Heh
YEAH, I'M FUKAMI
YOU'RE FU-KA-MI
RIGHT?
I
NO WAY...!
SHOCKED
YOU'RE REALLY THE SPITTING IMAGE OF...
Huh?
SHOUP DON'T LUMP ME TOGETHER WITH THAT LOSER, YOU DUMBASS
OH— YOU MEAN SHOU-KUN
GEEZ, I'M RIGHT HERE
SO UH...
WHERE'S FUKAMI?
looking around
OH
I see
THEIR PERSONALITIES ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

HUH?
HE'S NOT COMING
OH
heh
SO WHAT DO WANT TO DO? YOU WANNA GET SOMETHING TO EAT?
I MEAN, HOW ABOUT WE START WITH A BEER...?
I BET THERE'S A BAR AROUND HERE...
LIH... NO PROBLEM. ER
YOU WANTED TO MEET ME RIGHT?
SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
WHY—
O-OKAY...
What a moment!
COME ON! GET MOVING!

AM I IN THIS SITUATION...?
guzzle
AH! THAT HIT THE SPOT!
wipe
bam
I'LL HAVE ANOTHER PLEASE!
SURE COMING RIGHT UP!!
WHAT?
UH NOTHING

YOU'RE ALWAYS BEING COMPARED, AND YOU BECOME A SPECTACLE WHEN YOU GO OUT TOGETHER.
IT'S NO FUN BEING A TWIN
GEEZ... THAT'S BECAUSE WE'RE SEPARATE PEOPLE
YOU AND SHOU-KUN ARE REALLY DIFFERENT.
FUK-AMI
OH UH
But two people like Fukami would be cute.
Two people like me would be kinda like—
THE COMEDIANS
THE FUNNY GUY
THE STRAIGHT MAN
I SUP-POSE
IT'S ANNOY-ING!
CAN YOU IMAGINE THE SAME FACE AS YOURS, ALWAYS HANGING AROUND?
ANNOYED
WHAT?
HAHA!
HUH?

NOTHING
IT SEEMS YOU WON'T EAT SCALLIONS EITHER
HUH?
OH...
SHOU ALWAYS PUSHES THEM TO THE SIDE JUST LIKE THAT
When they're in things like chicken and egg on rice or noodles
SEEMS YOU GUYS ARE ALIKE AFTER ALL!
HA, HA...
IF IT'S FINELY CHOPPED, I'LL EAT ANYTHING
I DON'T LIKE BIG CHUNKS, THAT'S ALL!
SHUT UP!
HE'S THE SAME WAY!
SHUT UP!
—THERE IS SOMETHING KINDA CUTE ABOUT HIM.
No way!
Aw~ are you blushing?
Heh heh
WHAT?
AT FIRST, I WAS WONDERING WHAT KIND OF GUY HE WAS, BUT—

I'M DRUNK!
YOU DRANK A LOT.
CLUB
HEY, YOU KNOW
...FOR SOME REASON, IT FEELS LIKE WE'VE MET BEFORE!
WA HA HA HA ...
CUT IT OUT! IT'S LIKE YOU'RE SEDUCING A WOMAN
I'M NOT, I'M NOT... SERIOUSLY!
HONESTLY
IT WAS STRANGE
OR WAS IT JUST BECAUSE I WAS DRUNK...?
I'D JUST MET HIM TODAY, SO...
HOW COULD WE TOUCH EACH OTHER SO NATURALLY?

HE'S COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM SHOU...
OR MAYBE
HE AND SHOU ARE TOO SIMILAR
THOSE
WISTFUL EYES
SOMETHING IN THAT SLY SMILE...
BEFORE I KNEW IT, I'D BEEN DRAWN IN...

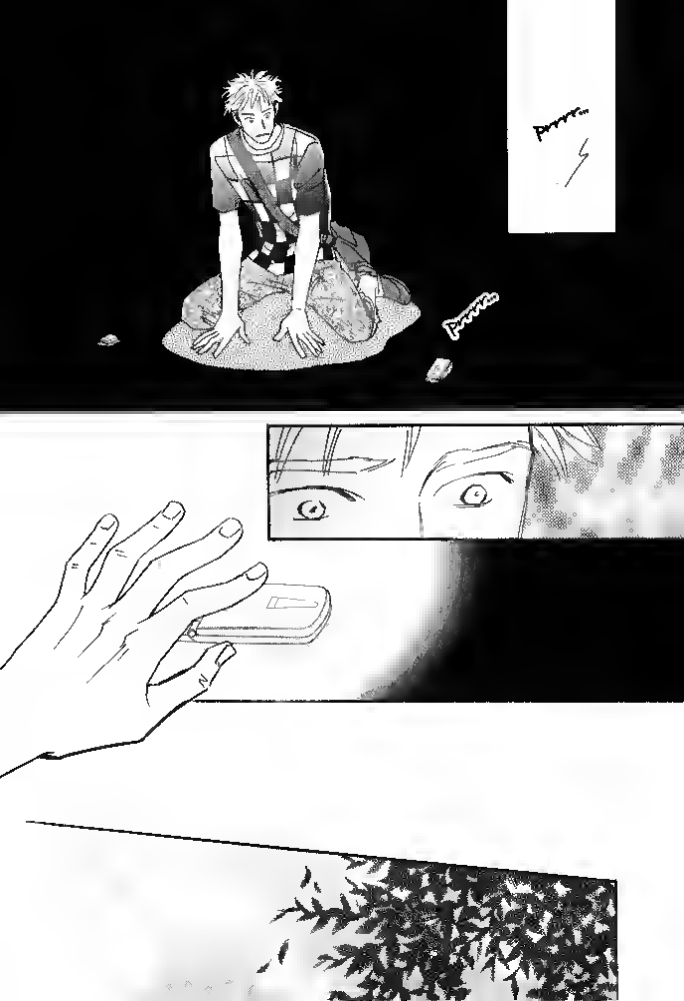
I CAN'T, I CAN'T! WHAT AM I DOING ?!
I...
SHOCK
release
S-SORRY
NO, THAT...
YOU'RE ACTING FAITHFUL NOW?
HEY... WHAT'S THE MATTER?
OH... THAT WAS CLOSE! IT MUST BE THE ALCOHOL...
STAB
I CAN'T FACE FUKAMI I ALMOST...
THUMP THUMP
In a lot of ways...
ARE YOU AN IDIOT?!
WELL NO... OF COURSE I GET ALONG WITH YOU TOO RYOU-KUN AND I'M HAVING FUN. BUT...
I LOVE SHOU-KUN COMPLETELY

AREN'T HE AND I THE SAME?!
DON'T LET MINOR DETAILS HOLD YOU BACK! YOU SHOULD ACT QUICKLY!
M-MINOR DETAILS—?!
Uh...
I WAS WORRIED ABOUT SOMETHING LIKE THIS...
WHAT A PAIN!
WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH SHOU, GOING OUT WITH SOMEONE BORING LIKE YOU?
WHAT—?!
grab
THAT CUT—

SHOU
AREN'T YOU?
YOU'RE
!
THAT CUT!
YOU GOT IT YESTERDAY, RIGHT? YOU WERE CUT BY SOME COPY PAPER.
LOOK! THIS MOLE HERE
THE FEEL OF YOUR FINGERS
NO
EVEN LEAVING THOSE THINGS ASIDE
YOU'RE SHOU!
HELL IF I KNOW!
I'VE GOT LOTS OF CUTS LIKE THIS
IT'S NOT JUST THAT!

YOU'RE FUKAMI SHOU FUKAMI, RIGHT?
DO YOU THINK I'VE LOOKED AT YOU LIKE ANY OLD PERSON?
I'M NOT WRONG!
YOU'RE WR
HA, HA
I SEE NOW
I HAD A FEELING WE'D MET BEFORE
BUT... WHY?
WHY THIS TRICK?
LET GO!
ARE YOU MAKING FUN OF ME?
ANYWAY

dash
ARRRGH!
LET GO!
HI
TH
THAT WAS LOW! LIKE USING A DEADLY WEAPON!
SFX: THWAK
HEY, FUKAMI!
FUKAMI!
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?


Prrrr...
Prrrr...

YO
WHAT A DELIN-QUENT STAYING OUT ALL NIGHT
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
Look
I CAME TO RETURN YOUR CELL PHONE

I KNOW I SHOULDN'T HAVE, BUT
I HAD A TALK WITH YOUR MOM
click
IT WAS SOMEONE CALLING FROM YOUR HOME
I SHOULDN'T HAVE BUT I LOOKED AT YOUR INCOMING CALLS
IT RANG A FEW TIMES
I
TODAY —
IS THE ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR BROTHER'S DEATH
I
FUKAHI —

!
HEH
SO ?
DID SHE TELL YOU ANYTHING ELSE?
open
LIKE, "THE TWINS DIDN'T GET ALONG."
—OR "THE ONE THAT SURVIVED IS AN UNFEELING JERK."
"HE DIDN'T EVEN GO TO HIS BROTHER'S FUNERAL AND HE NEVER VISITS HIS GRAVE OR ATTENDS MEMORIAL SERVICES."
"OH HOW I WISH—"

I WAS THE ONE ... THAT KILLED RYUU
"... HOW I WISH RYUU HAD BEEN THE ONE THAT SURVIVED ..!"
THAT'S ...
SEE.. HAYASE

DURING MY SECOND SUMMER OF HIGH SCHOOL
IN THE MIDDLE OF A HEAT WAVE
RYUU BROUGHT SOMEONE TO HIS ROOM AFTER HE CAME HOME FROM SUMMER SCHOOL.
IT WAS OBVIOUS WHAT THEY WERE DOING
THE GUY WAS ONE OF MY CLASS-MATES.
HUH?
SHOU ...?
I THOUGHT HE WAS A CLOSE FRIEND
BUT ... I WAS WRONG
WHAT'S WITH THAT STUPID LOOK?
heh

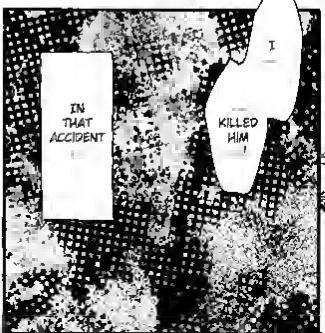
RYUU WAS SO PREDICT-ABLE
YOU TOOK TOO LONG MAKING UP YOUR MIND, SO I MADE THE DECISION FOR YOU
RYUU SAID THOSE THINGS TO LAUGH AT ME.
OR MAYBE HIS VISION WAS CLOUDED BY HIS DIRTY MIND?
IS THIS WHAT YOU CALL A FRIEND?
HEY, LOOK... SHOU!
HE COULDN'T EVEN TELL US APART!
AHAHA!
W-WAIT A MINUTE!
YOU... YOU'RE NOT SHOU?
HE'D ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THAT.
dash
HEY!
SHOU!
HE SNATCHED AWAY THE THINGS THAT WERE IMPOR-TANT TO ME...
...AND DESTROYED THEM ON PURPOSE.

WE WEREN'T THE KIND OF TWINS THAT GOT ALONG VERY WELL
SO YOU SEE
SHOU!
HEY, WAIT UP!
DON'T BE MAD!
AT LEAST I...
CALM DOWN!
HEY, SHOU!
IT WAS ONLY A LITTLE FUN...
THE TRUTH WAS WE WERE COMPLETELY FED UP WITH EACH OTHER
DON'T TOUCH ME!
THOUGHT IT WAS TRUE AT THE TIME
LET GO!

"I WISH HE WOULD DIE."
"I WISH RYUU WEREN'T HERE."

!
SO IT WAS AN ACCIDENT, RIGHT?

!!

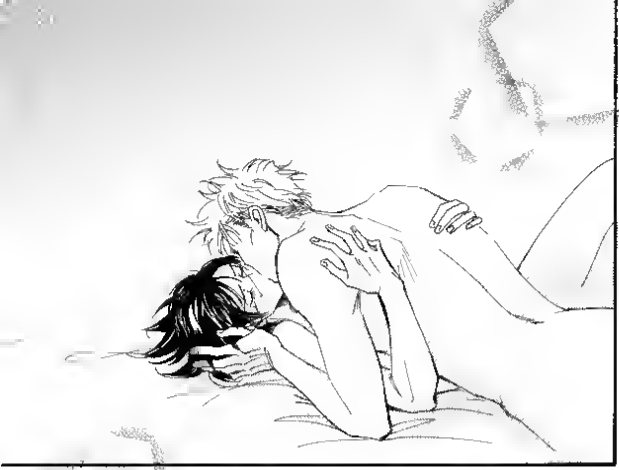

I KILLED HIM IN THAT ACCIDENT

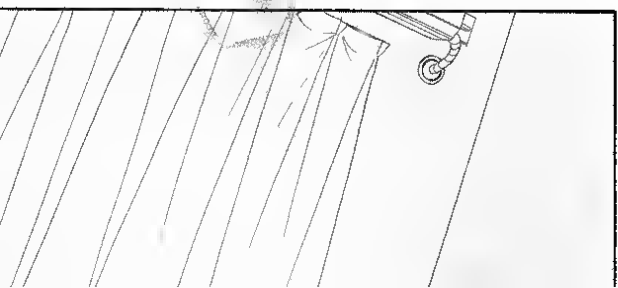
ONE BROTHER DIED INSTANTLY
THE OTHER BROTHER SUSTAINED MINOR INJURIES, BUT REMAINED UNCONSCIOUS FOR A TIME
WHEN HE FINALLY WOKE UP HIS BROTHER'S FORTY NINE DAYS WERE ALREADY OVER.
SHOU'S MOTHER TOLD ME THE STORY IN A CHOKED VOICE
"HONESTLY THE TWO OF THEM GOT ALONG VERY WELL."
"SOMETIMES, THEY WOULD FIGHT, BUT..."
"...WHENEVER ONE OF THEM DISAPPEARED, THE OTHER WOULD FRANTICALLY SEARCH FOR HIM."
RYUU...!
EVEN NOW...
ARE YOU SEARCHING
FOR A BROTHER WHO'S NO LONGER HERE...?

AND...
...YOU'VE BLAMED YOURSELF THE WHOLE TIME...
YOU'RE DESPERATELY TRYING TO MEND...
...THE EXISTENCE OF YOUR BROTHER WHO DIED
STUPID...

THAT'S CRAZY
YOU'VE NEVER MET HIM
YES, I HAVE
!
IF RYUJI WERE ALIVE, I'M SURE HE'D SAY THAT
!
YOU INTRODUCED ME TO HIM, RIGHT?
I FEEL THE SAME
HAYASE ....
"YOU'RE SO STUPID."
HE ....
—REALLY WAS THE KIND OF GUY WHO'D SAY THAT!

NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU HIDE IT...
YOUR FACE
YOUR HAIR
...THE SMALL THINGS, LIKE THAT TINY CUT AND YOUR MOLE...
IT'S NO ONE OTHER THAN YOU...
THAT'S WHY
I KNEW YOU WEREN'T RYUU...
SHOU
I LOVE YOU





I WOKE UP SUDDENLY
TO FIND SHOU STARING AT ME INTENTLY
I SHOULD GET GOING
HUH?
OH.
GOOD MORNING
I'M STILL EMBARRASSED
TAKE GOOD CARE OF HIM! HE MAY NOT LOOK IT BUT HE'S PRETTY SPOILED!
OW!
yank
I'VE GOT NO CHOICE, SO I'M LEAVING HIM IN YOUR CARE
HUH? "HIM?"
G— GOING ? WHERE?

huh?
heh
SEE YA
YOU'RE —?!
sit up
THIS IS —
flop
zzzz

RYUU
!?

splash
AT THE END OF THE SUMMER
SHOU VISITED RYUU'S GRAVE FOR THE FIRST TIME...
HE WAS FINALLY ABLE TO ACCEPT HIS BROTHER'S DEATH
I CAN'T EXPECT HIS SORROW AND GRIEF TO BE HEALED ALREADY, BUT—
IT'S NOTHING DON'T MENTION IT
THANKS HAYASE —FOR COMING WITH ME
...SURELY, LITTLE BY LITTLE...

ANYWAY...
"RYOU" APPEARED BEFORE ME.
I WONDER IF I SHOULD WRITE IT OFF AS ANOTHER ONE OF SHOU'S PRANKS...?
OR MAYBE RYUU'S SPIRIT REALLY DID ENTER SHOU'S BODY...
...AND LEFT SHOU IN MY CARE...
IT DOESN'T MATTER. THEY'RE BOTH...
...VERY FASCINATING GUYS...
AND SO...
OH...
...IT'S SO HOT..!
flap flap
HEY HEY... ISN'T THERE SOMETHING COLD TO DRINK AROUND HERE?
HUH, SHOU?

Uhn!
IN THE CONFUSION OF THE MOMENT, YOU STARTED CALLING ME "SHOU."
WOULD YOU MIND NOT DOING THAT?
YEAH?
UM... HAYASE
FUKAMI IS JUST AS COLD AS EVER.
OH...
OKAY
JUST CALL ME "FUKAMI" LIKE USUAL, OKAY?
goosebumps
IT MAKES MY BACK ITCH AND I CAN'T RELAX
BUT...
chuckle
IT'S OKAY

NO MATTER WHAT I'M CALLED, I'M ME
RIGHT?
I LOVE THIS FUKAMI
IT'S CONFIRMED...
FIRST, LET'S GET SOME BEER! BEER!
GREAT!
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY?
FUKAMI— YOU JUST DON'T GET IT
End

Reflections in the Water

Kunieda Saika

chapter four

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With special thanks to Dangerous Pleasure!

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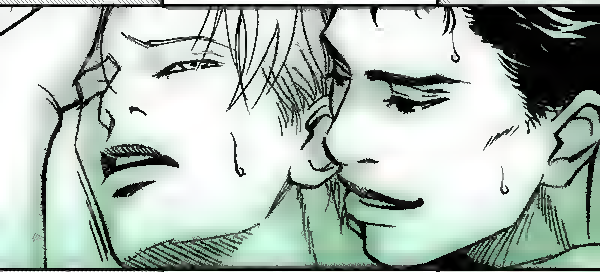
Secrets and Lies

Kunieda Saika



chapter five

CREDITS

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TRANSLATOR PRESENCEDEAR

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Secrets and Lies

HIMITSU TO USO

LESS THAN AN HOUR AFTER WE EXCHANGED NAMES WE WOUND UP IN A HOTEL ROOM.
THIS IS THE GUY
I WONDER IF THIS KIND OF THING IS NORMAL FOR TAKESHI KATAGIRI?
chirk

ARE YOU GONNA TAKE A SHOWER?
OH.
UH...
I, AT LEAST ...
UM.
YOU CAN GO FIRST ...
...NEED A LITTLE MORE TIME TO PREPARE MYSELF.
Heh.

flump
AH!
KATA-GIRI-SAN
WHAT ABOUT YOUR SHOWER—?
FOR-GET IT!!

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE GONNA ESCAPE IF I LET YOU OUT OF MY SIGHT.
NO, I ...
UH.
chink
PLUS
IT'S MORE FUN TO TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTHING PIECE BY PIECE.
!

!
TURN OFF THE LIGHT
ISN'T IT A LITTLE LATE TO BE EMBARRASSED?
WEREN'T YOU THE ONE WHO SEDUCED ME?
THAT'S TRUE ...

rustle, rustle, rustle,
I CAN'T BELIEVE I USED SUCH A HOKEY METHOD
MY SEDUC-TION
WAS MORE LIKE A GAMEFLE
AH!
OH
S-SORRY I JUST SPACED OUT
ON THIS STREET LINED WITH OFFICE BUILDINGS, HAD OUR DAYS OF PASSING BY LIKE STRANGERS COME TO AN END?
OR?

HUH?
OH YES
NICE TO MEET YOU.
SO
I HAD SEEN ME LOOKING AT HIM.
HE
THEN
tap
bu-thump

IS THIS SOME KIND OF INVITATION?
Smile
HE SMILED LIKE HE COULD SEE THROUGH MY DESIGNS

DAMN...
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT WAS YOUR FIRST TIME
ARE YOU OKAY?
I'M FINE
IF YOU'RE A VIRGIN YOU'VE GOTTA TELL ME YOU'RE A VIRGIN
I MEAN, WHY WOULD A VIRGIN HIT ON ME?
...
WELL... IT'S OKAY.
SIZZLE
IF YOU'D BEEN A WOMAN, I WOULD HAVE TREATED YOU ACCORDINGLY. BUT...
I DIDN'T EXPECT THIS FROM A MAN
exhale

OUCH
I WASN'T EXPECTING ANYTHING
close
I'M GONNA TAKE A SHOWER FIRST
GO AHEAD
SSHHHH...
STARTING TOMORROW WE'RE BACK TO BEING STRANGERS
SSHHHH...
SO THAT'S IT
clink
I JUST WANTED TO SEE
HOW HE'S DOING NOW

flop
IF YOU COULD SEE ME NOW WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?
chink
SISTER

ARE YOU ANGRY?
OR DO YOU DESPISE ME?
THESE DAYS...
I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER YOUR LAUGHTER ANY MORE

SASAKI-SAN!

I SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN YOUR BUSINESS CARD
I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO FIND YOU.
WHY ?
I FINALLY FOUND YOU!
HANGING OUT HERE FOR A FEW DAYS PAID OFF!
WHY'RE YOU GIVING ME THE COLD SHOULDER?
JEEZ!
WHAT DO YOU WANT?

IT'S THE COST OF THE HOTEL
THAT ROOM DIDN'T COST THIRTY THOUSAND
YOU LEFT THIRTY THOUSAND YEN
WHAT'S THIS
YOU
!
YOU GOTTA BE MORE CARE-FUL
YOU'RE THE TYPE WHO'D GET ROBBED BLIND IN THE CLUTCHES OF THE WRONG GUY
FOR ME?
THIRTY THOUS-AND?
WELL, THEN
IT'S A THANK YOU FOR SPENDING TIME WITH ME
WHAT?
IF THAT'S STILL NOT ENOUGH
YOU WANNA PAY ME MORE MONEY? DO I COST A LOT?

LET'S TAKE THIS THIRTY THOUSAND AND GO EAT A FANCY LUNCH!
grab
THEN, HOW'S THIS?
HUH?
!...
FEELING TENSE?

IT'S JUST BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE EATEN WITH SOMEONE
HMM?
NO, IT'S JUST
OR DON'T YOU LIKE THE FOOD HERE?
SO YOU LIVE ALONE?
YES
NO FAMILY?
MY MOTHER SHE DIED YOUNG
MY SISTER STILL LIVES WITH MY FATHER
MY FATHER HAS BEEN CONFINED TO BED SO MY SISTER TAKES CARE OF HIM
I INTERWOVE TRUTH AND LIES
REAL-LY?!
I WONDER IF HE WAS REMINDED OF SOMEONE JUST NOW?

NO, THEY'RE ORDINARY
MY FAMILY?
WHAT ABOUT YOUR FAMILY KATAGIRI?
YOU'VE HAD IT PRETTY ROUGH TOO HUH?
YEAH
YUU-SUKE SASAKI
SASA-KI-KUN
IS THAT RIGHT?
NO, I
IT WAS A LIE
OR, AT ANY RATE HE WASN'T TELLING ME EVERY-THING
BUT I'M PRETTY BUSY SO I DON'T GO HOME VERY OFTEN
JUST COM-PLETELY AVERAGE PARENTS AND BROTHER.
I HEARD HIM SAY THIS MANY TIMES THROUGH THE WALL
WHILE HE CLING TO MY SISTER AND CRIED
"Ryouko.. let's run away together..!"
"Oh my god! You need a doctor.."
IN HIGH SCHOOL, HIS STEPFATHER BEAT HIM, SO HE WAS ALWAYS COVERED WITH WOUNDS
HE RESENTED HIS MOTHER, WHO TURNED A BLIND EYE TO IT, AND CURSED THE LITTLE BROTHER THAT SHE BORE

HUH?
SO... WHEN WILL WE DO IT NEXT?
BUT THAT WAS MORE THAN TEN YEARS AGO...
AND HE'S NOT THE SAME BOY HE USED TO BE
YOU DON'T WANT...
TO CONTINUE THIS?
HE PROBABLY...

CONSIDERED ME AN UNUSUAL TOY
HOW MANY TIMES WILL HE PLAY WITH ME
BEFORE HE GETS BORED AND TOSSES ME ASIDE?
HOW-EVER
THAT MAY BE EXACTLY WHAT I'M HOPING FOR—
WHY
ARE YOU SEDUCING ME?
BECAUSE I'VE TAKEN A LIKING TO YOU
ME?
WHY—?
YOU DON'T SMILE VERY MUCH.
...AND NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES WE MEET, YOU'RE STANDOFF-ISH.

LOOK
EVEN WHEN I DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS
HUH?
UH...
FOR EXAMPLE
YET YOU PUT UP WITH ANYTHING I DO WITHOUT COMPLAINT
STUFF LIKE THAT
DOES IT HURT WHEN I MAKE YOUR BONDS TIGHT?
UH...
OR DOES IT EXCITE YOU?
HOW DOES THAT FEEL ...?

grab
I FEEL LIKE I'M IN SOME KIND OF FRENZY WHEN I LOOK AT YOU
pant
I FEEL REALLY GOOD
I WANT TO TORTURE
AND HUMILIATE YOU
AND MAKE YOU CRY
AH
flump
pant
DO IT
TORTURE ME
—IN ANY WAY YOU WANT!

AH
GUHH
UAH
I STILL DON'T KNOW
AAH
IF I FELT PLEASURE OR PAIN

Ah.
HOW-EVER
.... WHEN WE DID IT LIKE THIS ....
... I COULD ALMOST DELUDE MYSELF ...
... EVEN THOUGH IT WAS IMPOS-SIBLE ...

...
THAT
THIS
...
WAS
SOMETHING
LIKE LOVE
...

YO!
.....

I'VE GOT TO
WAKE UP.
Gotta
An acquaintance?

I CAN'T GO ON DREAMING FOREVER
IT'S NOT TOO LATE I'LL BE OKAY
...TO THE COMFORT...
...OF MY PREVIOUS LIFE IN ISOLATION.
I CAN GO BACK
open...

DID I
TELL YOU WHERE I LIVED?
STUFF LIKE THAT IS EASY TO FIND OUT. ALL IT TAKES IS A LITTLE INVESTIGATION
WHY ARE YOU AVOIDING ME?
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
WELL... I THOUGHT IT WAS ABOUT TIME TO END THIS.
IS IT BECAUSE OF THAT WOMAN THE OTHER DAY? SHE'S JUST A CO-WORKER
KATAGIRI-SAN
IT'S STRANGE
THAT YOU'RE GIVING ME AN EXCUSE
I SEE
SORRY FOR BARGING IN

IT'S OKAY
COME IN
damn
JEEZ
WHAT KIND OF GAME ARE YOU PLAYING?

pant
pant
KATAGIRI SAN
pant
IS THAT A PROBLEM?
WELL, IT'S JUST ...
AH
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TIE ME UP THIS TIME?
HEY!
DON'T DO THAT!
pant
IF WE DO IT LIKE THIS
pant
tremble
pant
AAH
AH
UN

I'LL REGRET
THAT
I INVITED YOU
INTO MY APART-MENT TONIGHT
Pant
Pant
Pant
AH

sizzle
burn
exhale
YOU GOT AN ASHTRAY?
YEAH
HM?
ON THE SHELF OVER THERE
BY THE PICTURE
HUH?

YUU
HUH?
WHERE IS IT? I DON'T SEE AN ASHTRAY...
?

YUU... SUKE?

YOU'RE
YUU-CHAN
THIS IS TAKESHI KATAGIRI-KUN
RYOU-KO'S LITTLE BROTHER?
SEE, I WAS HIS TUTOR LAST YEAR...
HEY!
YUU-SUKE!
I'M SORRY HE'S EXTREMELY SHY
IT'S OKAY WHAT-EVER
IT'S NOT LIKE I CAME TO MEET YOUR LITTLE BROTHER

I CAN'T TAKE MY FAMILY ANY MORE...
RYOUKO
LET'S GO SOME-WHERE TOGETHER
TAKESHI
I CAN'T
WHY NOT? DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU COULDN'T BEAR THIS LIFE ANY LONGER?
TOMORROW NIGHT I'LL COME FOR YOU.
BE READY AND WAITING
MY SISTER SAYS SHE DOESN'T WANT TO SEE YOU
WHY ?
RYOU-KO!
HEY, RYOUKO! COME OUT!
DIDN'T I SAY WE SHOULD GO SOME-WHERE TOGETHER?
LET'S LEAVE THIS ALL BEHIND AND GO FAR AWAY !

RYOUKO!
MY SISTER WAS COMPLETELY EXHAUSTED
OUR MOTHER WAS DEAD SO, NATURALLY SHE TOOK OVER ALL OF THE HOUSEHOLD DUTIES
OUR FATHER WAS BEDRIDDEN, AND I HER LITTLE BROTHER, HAD BECOME A RECLUSIVE AND TROUBLED CHILD
ALL OF THIS RESPONSIBILITY FELL ON MY SISTER'S SHOULDERS
THERE WAS NO WAY SHE COULD EVEN THINK ABOUT RUNNING AWAY

"Sister"
ACTU-ALLY
...SHE'D ALREADY STARTED PACKING
BUT I SAW HER.
"Are you abandoning us?"
"Yuu-chan..."
"I'm sorry... I'm sorry, Yuu-chan..."
SO, IN THE END
RYOUKO COULDN'T ABANDON HER FAMILY

OH THAT
IS SASAKI A FAKE NAME? YOU HAD A DIFFERENT NAME BACK THEN.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
WHY DID YOU APPROACH ME AFTER ALL THIS TIME?
AND ?
SHORTLY AFTER THAT, MY FATHER DIED
I HAD TO FINISH MY EDUCATION
SO I WAS TAKEN IN BY SOME RELATIVES
SHE GOT MARRIED
AND LIVES OVERSEAS NOW
AND RYOUKO ?

YOU SHOULD BLAME ME
IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR ME MAYBE MY SISTER WOULD HAVE GONE WITH YOU.
MAYBE YOUR LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT
SO YOU THINK YOU OWE ME SOME-THING?
SO IF I BEAT YOU AND GIVE YOU A HARD TIME ? THAT'S PAYING ME BACK?
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE DOING THIS ?
!

DON'T MAKE A FOOL OF ME!
slap
BANG
THIS ...
... IS JUST FINE ...
HEH ...

FROM TOMORROW ON, HE'LL DEFINITELY STOP PAYING ATTENTION TO ME.
I CAN FINALLY END IT.
IT'S ALL OVER NOW...
HEH HEH...
BOTH MY FEAR OF KEEPING A SECRET...
AND MY DREAMS...
...ARE GONE...

LOAN
HEY!
HEY!
???

DON'T IGNORE ME! I'VE BEEN WAITING HERE FOREVER!
UH
WHAT IS IT?
THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO FIND OUT
FIND OUT...?
IS RYOUKO HAPPY NOW?
YEAH...
SHE'S GOT A KIND HUSBAND LOOKING AFTER HER...
AND SHE'S GOT CHILDREN TOO...
IT'S A HAPPY LIFE...

BUT THOSE DAYS ARE BEHIND ME NOW.
I WAS A DUMB KID BACK THEN.
WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT NOW I WAS ATTEMPTING SOMETHING CRAZY.
YUU-SUKE
started
I SEE
heh...
IT'S OKAY THEN.
DID YOU ONLY GET CLOSE TO ME IN ORDER TO REDEEM YOURSELF?
ARE YOU ENDING IT BECAUSE YOU'VE TOLD ME EVERY-THING?
I DON'T LIKE THAT.

I
KATA GIRI-SA...
NO MORE GAMES AND LIES
REALLY, I'M JUST A PAS-SIONATE MAN
BUT I GUESS YOU KNOW THAT
SOME-DAY
LET'S GO SEE RYOUKO
IT MIGHT BE A LITTLE AWKWARD AT FIRST
SHE PROBABLY WON'T LOOK TOO KINDLY ON OUR RELATION-SHIP
BUT
SOMEDAY I'M SURE WE'LL LOOK BACK AND LAUGH
"I'm sorry, Uuu-chan"
"I'm sorry..."

"I need to get away from you guys"
"I'm sick and tired of this"
WAS IT ANGER OR JEALOUSY
"Are you leaving with that guy?
THAT DROVE ME BACK THEN?
"What... what are you doing? Stop it!"
"Yuu-chan
Yuusuke!
Stop!"
"I won't let you!"
"Yuu-chan?"
"Nao !"

YUU-SUKE?
HOW MUCH CAN I ENDURE?
CAN I BE BY HIS SIDE ...
...AND STILL HOLD ON TO SECRETS AND LIES?
THE DAY AFTER I RAPED HER...
...MY SISTER DISAP-PEARED.
I DON'T KNOW IF SHE'S DEAD OR ALIVE NOW.
EVEN IF SHE'S ALIVE, SHE'S PROBABLY UNHAPPY...

I CAN'T LET HIM GO NOW

PROB-ABLY
THE REAL TORMENT IS ONLY BEGINNING

End

IT WASN'T EXACTLY BY CHOICE BUT
WHEN WE WERE CHILDREN YOU AND I USED TO SLEEP IN THE SAME FUTON
A SINGLE FUTON

IT WAS JUST A PROBLEM WITH OUR HOUSING SITUATION I THINK IT WAS PRETTY COMMON
BUT
YOU ?
SHUN-CHAN
MY BROTHER IS OVER TWENTY NOW AND HE S SLEEPING IN THE SAME FUTON WITH THIS BEARDED GUY
WHAT
THE HELL IS HE THINKING ?

HAS HE DE-CI-DED THAT HE'S GAY ??!
OH
UH- LET ME INTRO-DUCE YOU
THIS IS KAZUYA TAKE-DA-KUN
AND
THAT'S MY LITTLE BROTHER, SHUNJI
YUICHI IS ONE YEAR OLDER.
AND HE USED TO GIVE ME A HEADACHE
YUCK!
Ew
You've got it!
HE WAS A DUMMY A SCARDY CAT...A CRYBABY
A HOPELESS BRAT WHO WET THE BED UNTIL HE WAS FIVE
sob sob sob
LOSER! YOUR LITTLE BROTHER CAN'T SAVE YOU
DUMMY!
BOTH OUR PARENTS WORKED SO IT WAS LIKE I RAISED HIM

HE WAS DOING IT ALL RIGHT
OF COURSE, I COULDN'T SAY THAT
YEAH
I WISH HE WERE MORE LEVEL-HEADED LIKE YOU. SO I COULD STOP WORRYING
THAT BOY!
WHAT'S WRONG? WAS YOU-CHAN DOING ALL RIGHT?
YOU'RE HOME EARLY, AREN'T YOU, SHUNJI?
WEL-COME BACK
I'M HOME
YOU
TOLD US EARLIER THIS YEAR
I WANT TO LIVE ON MY OWN
YOU
AND, WHAT'S MORE, THE WORLD IS NOT AN EASY PLACE FOR STUPIDLY SOFT-HEARTED PEOPLE LIKE YOU TO MAKE A LIVING.
HE WAS A HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE. HIS ST. MINA W.S BELOW AVERAGE. HE HAD A LOW PAYING JOB AT A LOCAL BAKERY.
WHO COULD BLAME THEM?
OUR PARENTS WERE SHOCKED AND STRONGLY OPPOSED IT.

THE MEDIATOR
Well you've got a point
HOW ABOUT A TRIAL? WHAT IF HE STARTS OUT WITH AN APARTMENT CLOSE BY?
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU CAN LIVE WITH HIS PARENTS FOREVER
I TOOK YOU'S SIDE
BUT
HEY, NOW
Yo! I bought some food
BUT
Yay!
"I'LL GO SEE WHAT SHE'S LIKE." THAT WAS THE REASON I EAGERLY VISITED YOU'S APARTMENT
SO I WAS CURIOUS TO SEE WHAT KIND OF WOMAN HE'D CHOSEN
I'D ALWAYS THOUGHT OF MY BROTHER AS AN ANNOYINGLY LATE BLOOMER
ROCK MANOR
Thanks, Shun-chan!
I BET HE HAS A GIRLFRIEND.
Congratulations
AND AND A REALLY NASTY-LOOKING ONE TOO...
TO MY SURPRISE, HE DIDN'T HAVE A GIRLFRIEND HE HAD A BOYFRIEND!
THAT'S
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN OVERLOOK IT...

OH
IT'S "SHUN-CHAN."
MY RESPON-SIBILITY AS A BROTHER!!
I DON'T REMEMBER SAYING YOU COULD CALL ME "SHUN-CHAN!"
ASS-HOLE!
AND I DON'T REMEMBER SAYING YOU COULD CALL ME "ASSHOLE."
NEVER MIND WHERE'S YOU?
glance glance
OUT SHOPPING
Don't let yourself in
WE'RE OUTTA EGGS
PER-FECT
I'VE GOT SOME-THING TO SAY TO YOU

I BREAK UP WITH YOU
.....
scratch scratch
MM
WHY?
?
"WHY" ?!!
JEEZ! YOU THINK I'M GONNA GIVE SOME HOMO MY BLESSING?!
I MEAN, YOU IS STILL A KID! HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THIS STUFF!
A KID?
YOU WON'T LET GO OF YOUR OWN BROTHER?
AND YOU'RE DRAGGING HIM IN WITH YOUR STRANGE WAYS...!
Heh

WELL, IT WAS MY FIRST TIME WITH A MAN
HE SEDUCED ME. IT WASN'T MY FIRST TIME
HUH?
FOR YOUR INFORMATION, HE DRAGGED ME IN
THAT'S A LIE! DON'T GIVE ME THAT BULLSHIT!
TH
IT'S NOT BULL SHIT
FUCK
YOU
exhale
—REALLY DON'T KNOW VERY MUCH ABOUT YOUR BROTHER, DO YOU?
open
I'M BACK!

Then why did you come over?
HUH? ALREADY?
I'M LEAVING!
Welcome home
HUH? SHUN-CHAN'S HERE
close
I got some eggs
PERFECT TIMING! YOU CAN STAY FOR DINNER
Uh, oh
HUH?
AND YOU'RE LEAVING TOO! LET'S GO HOME!
THIS WHOLE LIVING ALONE THING WAS A STUPID IDEA!
HUH? WHAT? WHAT IS THIS ALL OF A SUDDEN?
JEEZ! AS SOON AS I TAKE MY EYES OFF YOU, SOME JERK STARTS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF YOU!
Some jerk?
WAKE UP! THIS GUY IS DECEIVING YOU!
Sigh
ANY-WAY
I'LL INTRO-DUCE YOU TO A DECENT WOMEN NEXT TIME.
STOP PLAYING THESE STUPID GAMES AND START ACTING NORMALLY...!

pull away
YOU!
I'M NOT LEAVING.
I MEAN ....
TH... THIS IS MY HOME NOW.
YOU ....
AND ....
— WHOM I GO OUT WITH IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS, SHUN-CHAN.

GO TO HELL!
clench
WELL SHUN-CHAN
BANG!
SHIT

HE COULDN'T DO ANYTHING IF I WASN'T AROUND
TALKING BACK TO ME LIKE THAT!
"STOP CRYING AND LET'S CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES, DUMMY!"
"I'M SORRY, SHIN-CHAN."
I HAVE ALWAYS, ALWAYS
LOOKED AFTER HIM
AND PRO-TECTED HIM
That's dumb. I don't like oranges
And 50 oranges
So if you have 100 apples—
Why you falling down for no reason?
ALWAYS
ALWAYS
Hey! It's gonna spill!

"No! Yuu-chan!"
Uu.
"This dish was expensive! For goodness sake! You always always..."
"Oh, well..."
"I'M SORRY."
shock
"You should be a little more like Shun-chan."

!
"YOU SURE DON'T KNOW VERY MUCH ABOUT YOUR BROTHER."
I KNOW
WE'VE LIVED TOGETHER FOR AT LEAST TWENTY YEARS
FUMP!
FUMP!
UU-HN!
FROM A SINGLE FUTON TO BUNK BEDS
AND, THEN, WE HAD OUR OWN ROOMS
LITTLE BY LITTLE, THE DISTANCE WIDENED
..AND, NOW, WE LIVE IN DIFFERENT HOMES

HOW-
EVER
pound
pound
pound
Hmp
Chuuk
is a
cretin

IT'S OKAY.
SORRY ABOUT THE OTHER DAY.
YEAH...
I REALLY CAUSED YOU AND MOM A LOT OF TROUBLE
Because a certain someone peed in his sleep!
WE USED TO HANG IT OUT TO DRY EVERY DAY...
Wash
HUH?
I'm glad I don't have hay fever
YEAH. THE WEATHER WAS NICE TODAY
YOU HUNG THE FUTON OUT TO DRY...
SHUN-CHAN
RATHER, IT STARTED WITH THE BUNK BEDS...
COME TO THINK OF IT, WHEN DID YOU START WETTING THE BED?
IT WASN'T WHEN WE USED TO SLEEP TOGETHER IN THE SAME FUTON, WAS IT?

HUH?
stare
I'M SORRY, SHUN-CHAN.
THIS IS THE LAST TIME...

HUH ?
IS IT OKAY IF I DO THIS FOR A WHILE?
YOU ?
THIS POSI-TION
IS KINDA BAD ISN'T IT?
I—
chuckle
I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU, SHUN-CHAN
thump

SORRY, SORRY
WHAT I SAID WORRIES YOU, SHUN-CHAN
chuckle, chuckle
You look like when you laugh
WORRY?
IT'S MORE LIKE
I DIDN'T REALLY MEAN IT
PANIC
EVEN I DON'T KNOW WHAT I MEANT BY "LOVE."
YOU'S BODY HEAT
HIS PULSE
I COULD FEEL IT THROUGH HIS CLOTHES
WHEN WE WERE IN HIGH SCHOOL
YOU USED TO BRING GIRLS TO YOUR ROOM
chuckle, chuckle

IT WAS REALLY HARD FOR ME
IT MADE ME REALIZE THAT I COULDN'T SLEEP WITH YOU ANYMORE, SHUN-CHAN
I FELT LONELY AND DISAP-POINTED
SO
Oh! Sorry for disturbing you
Oh!
I'm home
Is that your little brother?
No, he's my older brother

HUH?
I FEEL BETTER NOW
SOMEHOW I MANAGED TO LEAVE HOME
AND FIND SOMEONE I COULD LOVE OTHER THAN YOU
I'M GLAD

THANK YOU
...FOR LOOKING AFTER ME ALL THIS TIME.
BUT I'M OKAY NOW.
NOW
FROM NOW ON YOU CAN CONCENTRATE ON YOUR OWN LIFE SHUN-CHAN
HE TELLS ME THESE THINGS
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
OH
...THIS IS KINDA EMBARRASSING, BUT
I SAID SOME PATRONIZING THINGS AND I THINK I MADE YOU WORRY
SHUN-CHAN?
...BUT FROM NOW ON...
HUH? WHAT'S WRONG?

DAMN IT, YOU BASTARD
WHY ARE YOU CRYING?
I'D BEEN HUMILIATED
—WHEN YOU DIDN'T ACT LIKE AN ELDER BROTHER
HM?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY I FEEL SO CRUSHED INSIDE
DON'T DO THAT IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE REALLY GOING BE APART RIGHT?
IF YOU WANT TO SEE ME, WE CAN MEET ANY TIME—
RIGHT?
—AND YET
MY TEARS WOULDN'T STOP
"THIS IS THE LAST TIME—"

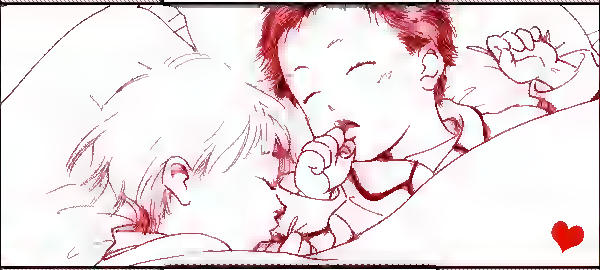
YOUR LITTLE BROTHER IS HERE
Hmph
OH
close
open
It's the annoying lumo
KAZU-KUN!
IS THAT CHOUX CREAM?
For some reason
PISSED OFF
SHUN-CHAN BROUGHT ME SOME, TOO!
WHAT A COINCI-DENCE!

BECAUSE AT THAT MOMENT
SOME-THING HAD COME TO AN END

I'LL BE BACK
OKAY!
BUT
Go home! Go home!
Kazu-kun's Stamped Burdock is really tasty!
IT'S OKAY
I'M LEAV-ING
AREN'T YOU GOING TO HAVE DINNER WITH US?
HUH? ALREADY?
I'M LEAV-ING!
THE WIND SUDDENLY PICKED UP
UGH
OUTSIDE
Whoosh
bang...
VANISHED IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE.
– AND THE FAINT TRACES OF YOU'S BODY HEAT
End

A Secret Futon

Kunieda Saika



chapter six

CREDITS

TRANSLATOR: PRESENCEDEAR

EDITOR: TXILAR

SCANNER: FEILOVE

Special thanks to ZL!

http://presencedear.com

The curse

Kunieda Saika

extra

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From Reijin Selection's

Summertime

THE CURSE

I'VE HEARD THAT CHARMS AND CURSES WERE ORIGINALLY THE SAME THING
"YOU'LL FORGET IMMEDIATELY WITH THIS CHARM."
THE LITTLE CURSE
THAT A CERTAIN MAN PUT ON ME YEARS AGO
STILL SMOLDERS IN MY HEART.
WHEN SUMMER COMES, MY MUDDLED SENSES BURN TO PIECES.
UH
.....

AH
MORE
MORE
WHAT DO I WANT?
WHEN I PUT IT INTO WORDS, THEY ALL FEEL A LITTLE WRONG
"STRENGTH"
"GENTLENESS"
"DEPTH"
"MORE"
I WONDER
WHAT WAS HE LIKE?

CAN I SEE YOU AGAIN?
NO
GOOD-BYE
I BET I'M RIGHT ON THE MARK
WELL HOW'D I DO?
DO I LOOK LIKE THE MAN YOU LOVE?
I CAN'T
REMEMBER HIS FACE CLEARLY ANYMORE
YOU'RE SO MEAN
AND YET
"YOU'LL FORGET RIGHT AWAY."
"DON'T WORRY."
TORMENT MY HEART UNFORGETTABLY EVEN NOW
ONLY HIS CURSE AND HIS LIES
End